

# CONSIDERATIONS

On the SPIRIT of

P O P E R Y,

A N D

The intended Bill for the relief  
of P A P I S T S in Scotland.

By J O H N E R S K I N E, D. D.

One of the Ministers of Edinburgh.

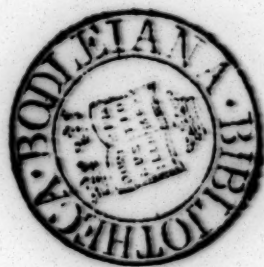
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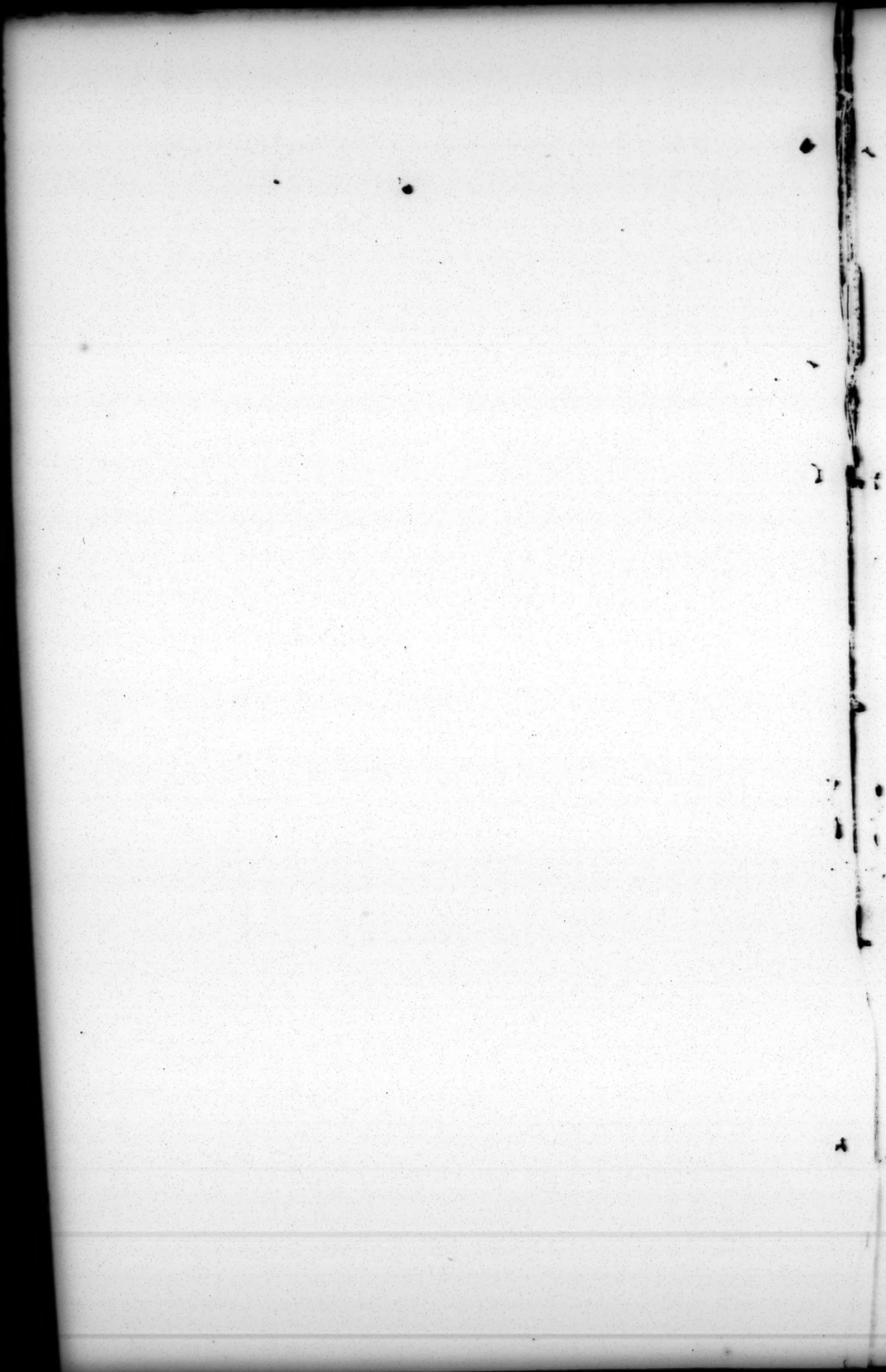
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# CONSIDERATIONS

On the SPIRIT of

P O P E R Y,

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The intended Bill for the relief  
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**I** AM as much convinced, as the warmest advocate for the toleration of Popery, that religion is to be propagated only by persuasion and good example; and that every man ought to enjoy liberty of conscience who can give sufficient security that he will not abuse his liberty to deprive other men of theirs: and this, I think, not only they can do who differ from us about church-government, and the subjects and mode of baptism, but even Socinians, and others, to whom we justly deny ministerial, and even Chri-

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stian communion. Men whose principles are as subversive of Bible Christianity as even Popery is, may, notwithstanding, feel and regard the sacred obligation of promises and oaths. The church of Scotland hath a civil right to an establishment, and dissenters from her have both a civil and a natural right to toleration. These natural and civil rights, like other rights of the same kind, may be secured by law; and the granting or continuing such security may be requested from the lawgiver. A sect, which thinks it lawful, by fraud or violence, to deprive every other sect of these natural and civil rights, and to tolerate no religion save their own, is a common enemy, against whose encroachments every other sect should guard, and solicit, if necessary, the public protection. It is a blind or distracted moderation that permits such a sect, by increasing their numbers and power, to perpetrate all the mischief which an ignorant zeal dictates to them is doing God good service. They may indeed offer to assure us of their friendly intentions, by the most solemn oaths, and an oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife.

But,



But, alas! that is no oath for confirmation which does not so ascertain to us the sincerity of the swearer, that we may reasonably repose confidence in what he asserts or promises. No confirmation is given by their oath, who believe not a God the avenger of perjury, or who scruple not at swearing falsely, or breaking an oath, when the interest of mother-church demands, and their own safety permits, it. Such therefore can claim no constitutional rights from government, because they cannot give government constitutional security, that they will not disturb it: though humanity, and even justice, forbids the hurting them, unless they attempt to hurt the sovereign, or their fellow-subjects. I allow, that Roman Catholics have naturally as much humanity, and honour, and conscience, as other men; but, alas! the humanity, honour, and conscience, at least of such poor illiterate Papists as the greater part of those in Scotland, are unhappily in other mens keeping. They must believe what the church believes; and what the church believes, whether it is to be determined by the decrees of Popes and general councils, or by universal tra-

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dition,

dition, they can only learn from the assertions of their priests. An artful advocate for their toleration, who is probably himself of their communion, acknowledges, that “the convert to Popery must  
 “ resign his liberty of thinking, and become the blind votary of an arbitrary  
 “ priest, who dictates what, and how, he  
 “ is to believe, with all the authority of  
 “ an apostle \*.” This may be told us in jest and derision, but it is a sober and serious truth. And what may not be dreaded, if the soul-directors should be Jesuits, whose intriguing spirit, immoral sentiments, and dark designs, have occasioned their expulsion from many Popish countries? One hath indeed published for our comfort, “that there is not at present one  
 “ single Jesuit in the world, the late Pope  
 “ having abolished that order †.” I venture however to give them the name which a late act of parliament hath given them, and am not satisfied, that changing their climate, and losing their titles, must refine their sentiments, and improve their character.

\* Paper under the signature of *Erasmus*, Weekly Magazine, 28th October.

† Ibid.

*Cælum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*

An order which, for political purposes, hath denied or concealed the crucifixion of Christ, connived at Heathen idolatry, despised the decrees of the Roman pontiff, and raised a persecution against the more honest Dominicans for publishing them, must be sorry supports of a free and Protestant establishment. Hardly can it be hoped, that a spirit which hath hatched the most deadly designs against rulers of their own communion, or principles employed to justify these designs, will promote tenderness for the blood of princes, or of fellow-subjects, whose religion they detest: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

But I need not travel to China, or even to Portugal or France, for proofs of what I assert. I need not confine my reasonings to the followers of Ignatius Loyola. How Papists have kept faith with heretics, the annals of Britain sufficiently tell. The men of Norfolk and Suffolk were among the first who declared for Queen Mary, on her assuring them, that she would use no force upon conscience in affairs of religion. Was this promise fulfilled, by her  
cruelly



cruelly putting to death some hundreds of her Protestant subjects ; and more in proportion in these loyal counties than in the rest of England ? James VII. on his accession to the throne, assured his privy council and parliament, that he would preserve the government in church and state, as it was then by law established. Was it from sacred regard to these promises that he pursued every measure for subverting our civil liberty, and ruining the Protestant interest ? I say nothing of the gunpowder-plot or Irish massacre. France, however, cannot ascribe these to the less gentle genius of England or Ireland : The Paris massacre was a scene of treachery and cruelty still more shocking, in which many a Heathen persecutor would have blushed to bear a part. After this I need not mention the revocation of the edict of Nantz, though it had been often ratified in the most solemn manner ; and persecuting and banishing, merely on account of their religion, a million of subjects of undoubted loyalty.

But we have been told, That the spirit of Popery is now become fair and candid, mild and courteous ; so that the Catholic  
would

would detest the deceiving or destroying the poor heretic : the lion is changed into a lamb, the raven transformed into a dove. I wish these miracles, of which scripture-prophecy gives no hint, were well attested ; ere, from a too hasty belief of them, we renounced the legal security we now enjoy for our religion and liberty. It is strongly whispered, that in some places of Scotland where Papists have become numerous, they have intruded into the houses, and disturbed the deathbeds of those not of their communion ; and in other respects betrayed an insolence which breathes little gratitude for the lenity of government, and the indulgence of their Protestant neighbours. I insist not however on this. Be it so, that Catholics among us have, for many years, behaved quietly ; and that their bishops and priests have exhorted them to such behaviour. It hath been their manner to disclaim violent and cruel measures when they could not attempt them without hazard ; and yet, when they acquired power, these professions were disregarded, and their tender mercies have proved cruelty. Bellarmine  
hath

hath taught them \*, “ If it were possible  
 “ to root out the heretics, that without  
 “ doubt they ought to be destroyed root  
 “ and branch. But if it cannot be, be-  
 “ cause they are stronger than we, and  
 “ there is danger, if they should oppose  
 “ us, that we should be worsted, then we  
 “ are to be quiet.” The lion, I acknow-  
 ledge, when chained, hath not devoured;  
 but can I thence conclude, that he will  
 not devour when set at liberty? If the  
 statutes of King William for restraining  
 Popery in Scotland were abrogated by a  
 formal repeal, it would be speciously pled  
 in bar of any process against Papists, that,  
 by the principles of our law, older statutes  
 for restraining them were repealed by de-  
 fuetude; and thus our case would be much  
 worse than that of our brethren in Eng-  
 land. And can we learn, from the con-  
 duct of Roman Catholics, when penal  
 statutes against them remain in force,  
 what would be their conduct should the  
 terror of all these statutes be removed?  
 can I infer, what are mens sentiments  
 and inclinations from the appearance they

\* De Laicis, 3. 22. p. 1319.



assume, when self-interest, and good policy, leads them to conceal their sentiments, and bridle their inclinations? Does the peaceableness of Roman Catholics, when the influence of priests over them is much restrained, ensure their peaceableness, when the subtle Jesuit shall have acquired over them an uncontrouled influence? Hath the church of Rome declared it unlawful to break faith with heretics, or to punish them with death? or hath the Pope renounced his pretended power of absolving princes and people from the obligations of the most solemn oaths? It cannot be pretended: it is in the nature of the thing impossible. Socinians, Arminians, Calvinists, or Lutherans, who call no man on earth master, have renounced many sentiments of those from whom they are denominated. But a church claiming infallibility, cannot, without confuting that claim, renounce the faith she once professed; and what that faith is she hath sufficiently declared, not by her decrees only, but by her works. Can we then expect, that the disciple should be more gentle than his master, or the servant than his lord?

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But

But I need not insist on this. Since many of us came into the world, the lion hath so roared, and devoured too, as may fully convince us, how he would roar and devour if he was unchained. Dr Foreaux tells us, in his letters to Mr Justice Blackstone, that a large folio volume was printed in England, 1753, under the care of the Jesuits, and for the use of the ecclesiastics in Portugal, intitled, *Opusculum theoloxico-juridicum de utroque recurfu*. According to the doctrine which it attempts to establish by reason and authorities, the civil power hath never any controul over the ecclesiastical, but the ecclesiastical always over the civil. Even the power assumed and exercised by the Popes in the darkest ages, of deposing princes, is explicitly asserted and maintained, and men are instructed how to commit the most flagitious crimes *salva conscientia*. The author of the Life of Cardinal Pole hath attempted to apologize for the flames kindled in Smithfield by Queen Mary; and G. H. hath tried to vindicate the burning of Huss, and to answer Dr A.-D.'s arguments for the toleration of heretics. The practice of Catholics in other countries hath corresponded

sponded to these persecuting principles of Catholics among us.

Geddes hath told us, that the Portuguese are naturally so tender-hearted and humane, that floods of tears run down their eyes when they are spectators of an ordinary execution ; yet, in Portugal, the court of inquisition remains a terror even to those of highest rank ; *auto's de fe* have not ceased ; and many a zealous Catholic thinks it meritorious, if, in the darkness of the night, he can assassinate a northern heretic.

In France, more than in any other Catholic country, civilization, politeness, learning, and liberality of sentiment, prevail ; and the French Protestants have always demeaned themselves as good subjects and peaceable neighbours. Yet Mr Roger, a minister in Dauphine, was charged, June 1744, with having read to his hearers an edict pretended to be sealed with the King's seal, granting them liberty of conscience. Mr Pionene, first president of the parliament of Grenoble, made, by the King's command, a strict inquiry into the matter ; which issued in setting Mr Roger's inno-



cency in a strong light ; yet, May 1745, he was sentenced to be hanged, not for any alledged forgery, but for having preached in several Protestant assemblies. Accordingly, in the seventy-ninth year of his age, he suffered martyrdom for the great truths he had preached, with that mildness, serenity, and fortitude, which melted into tears many of the Catholics, and forced their applause.——In August 1744, the Protestants of Languedoc were slandered, for having composed, and sung in their assemblies, a hymn, praying for success to the arms of the Empress, and King of Britain, against the tyrant of France. They soon sent a copy of this forgery to the commander of the province, cleared themselves of the heinous imputation, declared their loyal and patriotic principles, and signified, that a Catholic was commonly reported to be the author of that hymn, and a priest of Nîmes the disseminator of it. In another place, a priest, in the silence of the night, enters into a church, breaks the images, defiles the altars, runs to a considerable distance in great seeming terror, and charges the Protestants with having committed this sacrilege,

lege, assaulted his house, and endangered his life. Yet the priest, though convicted of this horrid and malicious crime, escaped with a slight punishment.

By royal edicts of the 1st and 16th February 1745, the rigorous execution of the former statutes against Protestants, or the harbourers of Protestants, was enjoined. These were not empty bugbears. Not to mention the men sent to the gallies, or the women confined in religious houses, for being present at Protestant assemblies for worship December 1745, Mr Desubas, who had laboured among the Protestant churches in the province of Vivarois, was seized near St Greve, and escorted by a lieutenant and thirty soldiers to Vernoux. Two thousand Protestants, men, women, and children, met them on the road, and humbly begged of the officer to release the prisoner, who told them, duty did not permit him; but he hoped the magistrates of Vernoux might do what they desired. They went there in consequence of his advice; and were assured by two of the chief inhabitants, that their request should be considered, and that they should have reason to be satisfied.

But

But they had not been long there, waiting for the desired success, before the Papists fired upon them from all quarters, even from their windows, killed thirty-six on the spot, of whom one of the first was a woman with child, and wounded 100, of whom few recovered. This treacherous and cruel massacre fired the indignation of many stout Protestants to rescue Mr Defubas. But they were prevailed upon, by their ministers, to retire; and Mr Defubas was soon after sent to Montpellier, where he suffered martyrdom, with great modesty, and an undaunted courage \*. The same blood-thirsty spirit hath since appeared. The case of Calas is well known. Of a Mitchell, and others, who have lately suffered for Protestantism, I have not procured any authentic account.

The free exercise of religion, and a capacity of civil offices, were secured by the King and the states of the kingdom to the Dissidents in Poland †; and yet, on the most frivolous pretexts, they have been

\* See Popery always the same, Lond. 1746, and the pieces annexed to Chapelle's *Nécessité du culte publique*.

† See Biblioth. Brem. class. 3. fasc. 4. art. 4. and class. 8. fasc. 2. art. 1.



punished as blasphemers, deprived of their churches, and in 1736 declared incapable of public offices. One instance of their sufferings is well known. In 1724, upon the false reports and suborned evidence of Jesuits, the chief magistrate of Thorn, and nine of the citizens, were put to death; and the Protestants were deprived of their church and school, and denuded of the privileges insured to them by the treaty of Oliva, without allowing them a hearing in their defence. To complete the shocking scene, the execution of the condemned citizens was ordered eight days before the time specified in the sentence, that no chance might be left them for procuring a pardon \*.

The late Empress-Queen owed, under God, the preservation of her hereditary dominions to the seasonable interposition of her Protestant allies; and yet, from her accession, to the year 1749, the Protestants in Hungary were deprived of 105 churches. A court commissioned by her Majesty, 1751, to inquire into the growth of Lutheranism, announced to some who

\* See Authentic Narrative of the proceedings at Thorn, London, 1725.

were

were lying in irons for the profession of that religion, that the Queen would rather that the land should bear thorns and thistles, than that it should be ploughed by Lutherans. Subjects there of the highest rank seem to have imbibed the same blind zeal. An order, to which only nobles, and those in ecclesiastical offices, were admitted, was erected in Hungary, 1745, under the protection of St Joseph and St Charles. How these tutelar saints notified their acceptance of the charge, or what benefits they have conferred on the order, I have not learned. They are honoured to wear on their breasts a golden star, as a badge both of their nobility and orthodoxy; and, to reward their zeal, the Pope hath granted to an altar in the church of Domolk the privilege, that, when mass was said there for any who died in their order, their souls should be instantly released from purgatory. Each of the order, besides devotional exercises, must employ part of every day in studying books of religious controversy, especially Bellarmine on Christian doctrine, which the Pope, in a late bull, had recommended. If heretics are not persuaded by their arguments,

guments, they are to with-hold or with-draw from them every favour, and by their authority to silence all who talk offensively, or raise doubts, against the Pope, or Catholic faith.—The fate of the Protestants has been much the same in the other Austrian territories. By the treaty of Alt Rantadt, 1707, 125 churches were given to the Lutherans in Silesia; and yet, by an arbitrary and unexpected decree of the Emperor Joseph, 1709, in direct violation of that treaty, they were deprived of these churches; and all who had embraced Lutheranism were obliged to renounce it, under the pain of banishment, or confiscation of goods.

By the treaty of Westphalia, 1650, the establishment or toleration of Popery, Lutheranism, or Calvinism, was to remain on the same footing, in every state and city of Germany, as it had been in the year 1624; which, on that account, was termed the *annus decretorius*. The Pope protested against that treaty, as null and void, in so far as it was derogatory to the interests of the Catholic faith. Many dissertations have been published by divines in the Popish German universities, in or-



der to overthrow the privileges which Protestants enjoy by that peace; and many bitter anonymous tracts have pled the same cause. Indeed the treaty hath been violated. Almost every year complaints of grievances have been brought before the Evangelic body, and by them presented to the Imperial chambers: but seldom have these grievances, from the equity of Roman Catholics, found redress. The Protestants of the county of Hohenloe found it in another way; the Margrave of Anspach having taken up arms in their behalf, and forced their enemies to do them justice, after they had suffered long and fore oppression, and made many vain applications to the Emperor for relief.

Protestants under Popish princes were, by the treaty of Westphalia, allowed, if they chose, to sell all their possessions, and to remove to other countries: but this article, intended for their benefit, hath been abused to their hurt, Popish princes constraining them to emigrate. About 20,678 were, on account of their religion, driven from the archbishoprick of Saltzburg, December 1731, and January 1732, the weather being stormy, and the cold most bitter  
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and intense. Nor were they allowed the favour due even to voluntary emigrants. Many of them were forced to leave their all behind them, and to depart in a most naked and destitute condition, not being permitted to furnish themselves with necessaries for their journey. Many of them had previously endured a long and cruel imprisonment; and many of them were not suffered to carry even their wives and children along with them \*.

When princes have renounced Protestantism in those states of the Empire where it is the established religion, not content with chapels for themselves and their families, in their places of residence, they have unnecessarily erected many such in other parts of their territory; and even introduced the *simultaneum* into Protestant churches, *i. e.* Popish worship, at hours different from that of the Protestant worship. The Evangelic body hath often complained against this, as a grievance, attended with unhappy consequences. The prince hath in this way gradually spread his own religion; and by also encour-

\* Account of the sufferings of the persecuted Protestants in the archbishoprick of Saltzburg, Lond. 1732, and Further Account, Lond. 1733.

ging foreign Papists to reside in his dominions, their numbers and influence have so increased, that, at last, they exceed Protestants in both. The Newburg family having succeeded to the Palatinate, not content with restraining Protestant ministers from insisting on religious controversies, or using certain prayers and hymns offensive to Papists, enjoined their Protestant subjects on the high festivals to abstain from working, and attend the Popish worship; and to suffer themselves, their wives, and families, to be instructed by Popish priests and schoolmasters. At length they went further, and endeavoured to oblige them to bow before the host. Saxony is perhaps the only considerable country where Protestantism flourishes under a Popish prince. The causes of this are so peculiar, that it is highly improbable they will ever take place any where else: but a detail of them, however curious and useful, would carry me too far from my present argument. In those states of the Empire where, by the treaty of Westphalia, Protestants are only tolerated, the hardships they endure are still greater. When they intermarry with Papists, every  
method



method is generally used to make the Protestant party unhappy ; and the children of both sexes must be educated Popish.

These effects of Popish power and influence flow not from any peculiar malignancy of foreign climates, or of national characters. Nor will the freedom of inquiry, and gentleness of manners, which, how much soever we boast of them, have not always displayed themselves when there was occasion for it, secure us from these effects. The invidious insinuations, and ill-natured aspersions, which the friends of administration, and gentlemen in the opposition, mutually throw one upon another, neither indicate candour and liberality of sentiment, nor encourage a fair and free discussion of important political questions. I would not greatly confide in that humanity, which can coolly murder a character, or see it murdered by another. Were there less cause for such complaints, what security is there, that when numbers are perverted to the Popish religion, numbers will not also be infected with its intolerant spirit ? It hath been pled in behalf of the intended law for relief of Roman Catholics, That their aid  
is

is needed against our common enemy, and by this measure may be procured. But we had need to be cautious of guarding against a lesser danger by exposing ourselves to a greater. If arms are put into their hands, a zeal for God not according to knowledge may in some fatal hour employ them for purposes which every friend of our happy constitution would bitterly regret. How galling would the reflection prove, "We might have prevented this calamity, but we cannot retrieve it?" Jealousies of those who fight by their side, may, in some critical and decisive moment, damp the spirits of our soldiers, and produce an unhappy panic. Be it so that these jealousies are groundless; still, however, such indulgence to men hitherto accounted bitter enemies of our constitution, as alarms many who, in the day of danger, approved themselves its firmest friends, may hurt rather than forward exertions against our ambitious neighbours. Even the growth of Popery, tho' Papists were not employed in our armies, or fleets, might, though less speedily, as surely, overturn our present happy establishment. When Protestants are banished

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ed from many Popish countries, or suffer in them every discouragement and oppression; and Papists, nay even Jesuits, find access to Protestant states, and obtain in them a variety of privileges; an increase of Popery, and apostasy from the Protestant religion, may ensue, and in time bring on a general persecution of Protestants. Nor is it to be forgotten, that some of the most learned and pious, who have searched into the sense of scripture-prophecy, apprehend, that Popery, before its final destruction, shall, for a short season, prevail as universally, and rage as fiercely, as ever she hath hitherto done. If this judgement cannot be averted, at least let us not hasten it by fool-hardy experiments. I should be sorry, if any proved so unthankful for the free exercise of his own religion, as to persecute the Papist for the private and peaceable enjoyment of his. But no such spirit hath appeared; and I am well assured, from ministers in that neighbourhood, that the disturbance given to a Popish meeting in Glasgow, about which some have raised so hideous an outcry, was occasioned by the insolent behaviour of a Papist to a few idle boys  
who



who had followed him from curiosity. Those who apprehend the Popish bill may endanger the public safety, have been wittily compared to an Indian chief, convinced of the barbarity of eating the flesh of enemies, and yet allowing his tribe in the practice, because it was the custom of the tribes with whom he waged war. But if I know my enemy hath an appetite for human flesh, doth it follow I would eat him, because I endeavour to prevent his eating me? Kindness and generosity do not oblige me, prudence does not permit me, to put a sword into the hand of an enemy, or madman; and if I remonstrate against another's putting a sword into his hand, is it quite candid, to conclude from this, that I have imbibed the cruel spirit of that enemy, or madman? Because I would not put it in the power of another to murder me, is it fair to infer that I wish to murder him?

It hath been plausibly argued, That the law of King William, propoted to be repealed, is of so severe and sanguinary a nature, as shocks humanity; that laws can never be right, when the execution of them would be wrong; and that the  
law

law in question originated from the enemies, not from the friends, of our religion and liberty. High as my regard is for Bishop Burnet, I am not warranted to explain the nature and tendency of a law, hitherto esteemed no inconsiderable fence of the revolution-settlement, by that anecdote in his history, which does equal dishonour to the Tories, who proposed the law, and to the Whigs, who did not oppose it. I think it hath not been sufficiently attended to, that laws for punishing a crime, and laws for guarding, by sufficient sanctions, against a dangerous evil, are of very different consideration. Punishments, properly so called, should always be in proportion to the atrocity of the crime. But as it is expedient, that one man should die for the people, rather than that the whole people should perish, restraints necessary for the safety of thousands may be enforced by sanctions, by which one or a few individuals may suffer, much beyond the demerit of their crime. When the plague rages in one country, the government in neighbouring countries is not arraigned as cruel or unjust, when regulations for preserving

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public

public health, are enforced, by punishing, with immediate death, every one who dares to violate them : and is not a community equally intitled to guard her political health and existence ? If you say she is not, you must condemn laws against seditious or treasonable words and actions, and measures to prevent an enemy from invading your territories, who gives sufficient indications of intending it. If you say she is intitled, I ask, is not the health, and even existence, of a state hazarded, when the infectious tenet spreads, That treason, murder, and treachery, for the pious purpose of rooting out heresy, cease to be criminal ? And has not a state good cause to disable from poisoning her youth with these tenets, a sect infamous for teaching them, and for practising them too ? I acknowledge, however, that the laws now in question for restraint of Roman Catholics, are enforced with sanctions much too severe. The terror of them hath, I doubt not, prevented many successful attempts which would otherwise have been made for perverting Protestants. But as the probability of their being executed every day diminishes,



es, the influence of that terror must proportionally abate ; and perhaps our religion and liberties would be better guarded, by gentler penalties steadily inflicted, than by laws which the genius and spirit of the times hath rendered as dormant as if they were obsolete. Dr Furneaux, in his letter to Mr Justice Blackstone, 2d edit. p. 125.—127. acknowledges, that penal laws against Popery may be vindicated, because it is not merely a corrupt and erroneous system of religion, but a wicked conspiracy against all who oppose her enormous superstitions and usurpations ; and hath uniformly appeared to be so, where-ever her power hath been predominant ; so that it is always requisite to be on our guard against the prevalence of so implacable an enemy to the general liberties of mankind, and to our own happy constitution. But then he thinks, for the reason a little ago suggested, that the laws in Holland for restraint of Popery may be preferable to ours. That wise people permit no Jesuits in their country, no priests but natives, no attempts to make proselytes, &c. ; and in case of a breach of any one of these regulations, the place

of worship belonging to the Roman Catholics in the district where the offence is committed, is immediately shut up. The consequence is, that there is hardly ever a convert attempted to be made to Popery ; Catholics are preserved or weaned from any attachment to a foreign interest ; and at the same time, having no share in the magistracy, and their numbers and persons being well known, the danger which might be apprehended from their principles, is in a great measure precluded, perhaps in a greater degree than where the laws are so severe, that the idea of executing them shocks our humanity. This, I acknowledge, is plausible ; but I much doubt if the genius of Britain, and our jealousy of every restraint upon liberty, admits so strict a police as takes place in Holland. The Doctor adds, “ to guard against the prevalence of Popery is mere self-defence ; “ for Papists style us heretics, and as such “ fit for nothing but extirpation in this “ world, and damnation in the next.” If it is thus necessary to take every method requisite for our security against their persecuting principles and practices,

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old laws ought not to be abrogated, or new laws enacted, in which the interest of every Protestant is deeply affected, till counties and boroughs, the proper guardians of our civil, and church-judicatories of our religious rights, are satisfied, that the security granted for both by the Union cannot be impaired by such change.

I cannot lay great stress, in the present question, on the unanimity with which the English act passed last session of parliament. Often in the close of a session both houses are thin, and measures less maturely weighed than their importance deserves. Had the consequences of the stamp-act been foreseen, it would have found the keenest opposition; and I may venture to say Mr Grenville would never have moved it. Besides, in so commercial, populous, and well-cultivated a country as England, Jesuits would hardly adventure on practices, to which, in some parts of the highlands and islands of Scotland, distance from courts of justice, and from the clergy of the established church, would often embolden them. The late act being proposed by some distinguished leaders of the opposition, is, with me,



no decisive proof of its salutary tendency. A future Burnet may announce, that they were instigated to the motion, by desire of embarrassing administration, or by arguments addressed to the interested principle, not to the understanding. I would flatter myself a more candid account is better founded. Some might hope, that this indulgence to Papists, would harken greater indulgence to Protestant dissenters, who better merit it; while others apprehended, that national credit needed the support of wealthy Catholics. I honour the purity of these gentlemen's intentions. I only wish, time may not convince them, that even gold can be purchased too dear.

I have heard from good authority, that the Premier declared in parliament, he would be against pushing the English bill if it gave general umbrage. If our nobility, gentry, clergy, and commons, neglect to apprise government what evils many of the best-affected subjects apprehend from a similar law in Scotland, the guilt of its being enacted must be chiefly imputed to them, not to the Sovereign, or prime minister.

Some

Some who wish, from malice or interest, to excite the public indignation, or the displeasure of those in power, against such as differ from them in questions of civil or church policy, have buzzed it about, that the clamour raised against the intended bill proceeds from men of a turbulent factious spirit, disaffected to the measures of administration. In answer to this, which indeed hardly needs an answer, I would observe, that opposition to the bill originated in the city of Glasgow, the inhabitants of which have been always remarkably well affected to our present happy establishment, and are almost all on the side of administration in the American contest. I might add, that clergymen of the most opposite sentiments in that question, and in our ecclesiastical debates, have equally discovered their alarm at the intended bill.

Many of the most respectable synods in Scotland, indeed almost all who had seen the English act at the time of their meeting, have testified their alarm. This is a more genuine indication of the mind of the church, than the silence of a general assembly, which had not seen the bill,  
and

and knew very imperfectly what it contained. Strangers to our church-government they must be, who know not, that a general assembly hath no power to pass or enact laws, till they transmit an overture for that purpose to every presbytery in Scotland and that overture hath by a majority of presbyteries been approved. Surely, then, a general assembly, without such approbation, is no way authorised to alter our present establishment, or to renounce any legal security for it which we now enjoy.

The head of the Roman-Catholic clergy in Scotland hath ascribed the resolutions taken by different synods against the Popish bill, to a late pamphlet by an Episcopal clergyman, whose zeal against Popery he invidiously ascribes to the discovery he had made last spring of the willingness of Papists to take the oaths to government. Those who tell stories, had need of good memories. The alarm of the city of Glasgow, and of the synod of Glenelg, commenced some months before the publication of that pamphlet; and therefore, if caused by it, were effects prior to the cause. Not one in ten in the  
eight



eight synods which have since declared their sentiments on the same side, could have had opportunity of reading Dr A.-D.'s letter. It is strange that G. H. should have forgot, that Dr A.-D.'s zeal against Popery commenced much earlier than last spring; when before that time the Doctor had published two pamphlets against his book on miracles; for which, as well as his late letter, he merits the thanks of every sincere Protestant. But G. H.'s forgetting that Pope Clement VI.'s letter to the King and Queen of France, distinguishes between vows and oaths, and allows their confessors to absolve them from both, is another proof, that his weaknesses are as beneficial to his cause as his abilities. The revolution-settlement has much to fear from indifference about Popery; but can never be endangered by honest endeavours to kindle zeal against it; and a day will come, when God will put a difference between him who sweareth with a doubting conscience, or an intention to betray; and him who, from mistaken ideas of religion or civil government, feareth an oath.

It is vain to argue with those who  
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plead, that nothing is granted to Papists by the English act, unless the right of privately exercising their religion, educating their own children, and transmitting to them their property. Had this been all, G. H. would have hardly undertaken his journey to London last spring on that account; his party would not have so much boasted of the success of his negotiations; nor would L. 50,000 have been employed for building and endowing a splendid mass-house at Bath, with the finest paintings, and excellent vocal and instrumental music, to attract the many gay and thoughtless young people who resort there. Indeed some of the most candid and able defenders of the act have acknowledged, that Papists, and even Jesuits, are authorised by it, to open mass-houses, keep boarders, and teach schools. It is this which hath raised the general alarm; though I acknowledge I dread the worst consequences from any extension of an act to Scotland, whereby Papists shall be allowed to exclude their next Protestant heirs, or whereby they shall be permitted to purchase land and hereditaments. Sums may be advanced for the last purpose by  
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the society *de propaganda fide* ; and purchases made, which may eventually expel the Protestant tenants from many corners of our land, and supply their place by foreign Papists.

Some ridicule our fears, as inconsistency with confidence in the goodness of our cause, and with reliance on the divine protection. "Great," say they, "is truth, and in every combat shall finally conquer. The church is founded on a rock ; and Christ hath promised, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her :"

An argument no more pious or solid, than that by which the devil would have persuaded our Redeemer to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple : "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." It is a tempting, not a trusting God, to neglect the defence of truth, against the specious reasonings, the crafty misrepresentations, the sly artifices and secret mines, or the open violence of her enemies. It is fanaticism, to view, with indifference, threatening appearances of danger ; and, while we pretend to lean



on God for help, to slight the means of safety which Providence hath put in our power. Truth hath little to fear from those who exhibit to the public a fair and undisguised account of their opinions, however erroneous; submit them to a thorough and impartial examination; and appeal to reason and scripture for decision. But when, to gain profelytes, the obnoxious part of a system is concealed, disguised, or denied; free inquiry discouraged; and reason and scripture objected to, as incompetent judges of controversy; the blind must lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch. Other sects more modestly oppose particular truths, and leave you in full possession of the weapons by which you may resist their assaults: but Popery takes away the key of knowledge, leaves not a sword or shield in Israel, and persuades you, that, to see clearly, you must pull out your eyes, and exclude the light. She soothes the indolent, by teaching them, that truth is best found when least searched after; she gratifies the senses and imagination, by substituting pomp and show, instead of spiritual worship; and she allures the profligate, by telling him,  
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that deliverance from the pains of purgatory may be purchased with money. She bribes the poor to profess a religion which they do not believe, and to suffer their children to be trained up in it. To bewitch the unwary, many articles of the Popish creed are so explained and softened, that little difference can be discerned between them and the Protestant doctrine. Many of the guardians of youth, infected with the fashionable notion, that right opinion in religion is of little importance, and wrong opinion not dangerous, think it unnecessary, perhaps illiberal, to inspire their pupils with any respect for the religion of their country, and are mighty indifferent though others should instil into them prejudices against it. By the increase of a selfish, and the decay of a public spirit, men are prepared to sacrifice their friends, their country, their conscience, to any worldly advantage, or even a chance for it. They receive not the truth in the love of it, that they may be saved; and therefore, by the natural tendency of things, as well as by the just judgement of God, they are given up to strong delusions, to believe a lie. Christ shall

shall always have a seed to serve him: but the gospel may be taken from nations which now enjoy it.

I conclude these reflections by transcribing a passage from an election-sermon preached by Dr Mayhew of Boston, 1754, before Governor Shirley, his Majesty's Council, and the House of Representatives, as a delineation of the consequences of the British colonies being conquered by France. I seriously recommend it to Britons who lean upon native Papists, or to Americans who confide in French Catholics, for the support of their respective claims.

“ And what horrid scene is this, which restless, roving fancy, or something of a higher nature, presents to me, and so chills my blood! Do I behold these territories of freedom become the prey of arbitrary power? Do I see the motely armies of French, and painted savages, taking our fortresses, and erecting their own, even in our capital towns and cities! Do I behold them spreading desolation through the land! Do I see the slaves of Lewis, with their Indian allies, dispossessing the free-born subjects of King George of the inheritance received from their forefathers,



fathers, and purchased by them at the expence of their ease, their treasure, their blood ! To aggravate the indignity beyond human toleration, Do I see this goodly patrimony ravished from them by those who never knew what property was, except by seizing that of others for an insatiable lord ! Do I see Christianity banished for Popery ! the Bible for the mass-book, the oracles of truth for fabulous legends ! Do I see the sacred edifices erected here to the honour of the true God, and his Son, on the ruins of Pagan superstition and idolatry ; erected here, where Satan's seat was ; do I see these sacred edifices laid in ruins themselves ! and others rising in their places, consecrated to the honour of saints and angels ! Instead of a train of Christ's faithful, laborious ministers, do I behold an herd of lazy monks, and Jesuits, and exorcists, and cowed and uncowed impostors ! Do I see a Protestant, there, stealing a look at his Bible, and being taken in the fact, punished like a felon ! What indignity is yonder offered to the matrons ! and here to the virgins ! Is it now a crime to reverence the hoary head ; and is he alone happy,

happy, that taketh the little-ones, and dasheth them against the stones ! Do I see all liberty, property, religion, happiness, changed, or rather transubstantiated, into slavery, poverty, superstition, wretchedness ! and, in fine, Do I see the miserable sufferers (those of them that survive) bitterly accusing the negligence of the public guardians ! and charging all their calamities, less upon the enemies, than upon the fathers of their country ! O dishonest ! profane ! execrable sight ! O piercing sound ! that entereth into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth ! Where ! in what region ! in what world am I ! Is this imagination, (its own busy tormentor), or is it something more divine ? I will not, I cannot believe 'tis prophetic vision ; or that God has so far abandoned us."

When Dr Mayhew gave this warning, it was a day of darkness with North America. It is so now with Great Britain. Let us not render it darker still. Let the friends of their country be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Let none of them hurt the cause they design to serve, and furnish Papists with a wished-for and specious plea, in favour of the open

pen toleration of their religion ; by injuring their persons, properties, or intended places of worship ; by assuming the office of makers or executors of the law ; or by any conduct seditious and disrespectful to government. At the same time, let them use their constitutional right of petitioning the legislature against every measure from which they apprehend hazard to their lives, their liberty, their religion. If they dread danger from Papists, and even Jesuits, being allowed to open public mass-houses, schools, and boarding-schools, let them delineate that danger as it really appears to them. It is uncandid to suppose, that parliament will disregard humble addresses from men of known loyalty on a matter in which their highest interests are so deeply concerned. But should the addressers fail of the desired success, at least they have done their duty, and delivered their own souls.



P. S. The Author is indebted for the account of the grievances of Protestants in Germany, and the Austrian dominions, to Kieffling's *Wahrheit der Lutherischen religion*, Lips. 1762, and Walch's *Geschichte der Evangelisch Lutherisch religion*, Jena 1753; which he neglected to cite at the foot of the page, as they are in a language with which few of his readers are acquainted. The known literature and integrity of these authors, and their publishing these facts in Germany, so great a part of which is Popish, are sufficient grounds of relying on their narratives.

F I N I S.

